

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

**Division of Fish and Wildlife
Marine Fisheries**

**2005
Management Plan for the
Finfish Fishery Sector**

developed in association with the
commercial fishing licensing provisions set forth in the
"Rules and Regulations Governing the Management of Marine Fisheries"



December 13, 2004

AUTHORITY: These regulations are adopted pursuant to Chapters 42-17.1 "DEM", Section 20-1-4 and 20-2.1-9(5), in accordance with 42-35, of the Rhode Island General Laws of 1956, as amended.

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RULE 1

PURPOSE The purpose of this Management Plan is to comply with the requirement of 6.2 of the “Rules and Regulations Governing the Management of Marine Fisheries”. The objective of which is to achieve the optimum yield from each fishery on a continuing basis while maintaining self-sustaining stocks of all marine species, and to restore overfished stocks to sustainable levels.

RULE 2

AUTHORITY These Management Plans are promulgated pursuant to Chapter 42-17.1 “DEM”, and Section 20-1-4 and 20-2.1-9(5), in accordance with Chapter 42-35, Administrative Procedures, of the Rhode Island General Laws of 1956, as amended.

RULE 3

APPLICATION The terms and provisions of these Management Plans shall be liberally construed to permit the Department to effectuate the purposes of state law, goals, and policies.

RULE 4

REGULATIONS See below

RULE 5

SEVERABILITY

If any provision of these Rules and Regulations, or the application thereof to any person or circumstances, is held invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the validity of the remainder of the Rules and Regulations shall not be affected thereby.

RULE 6

SUPERSEDED RULES and REGULATIONS Erlid # 2780

On the effective date of this Management Plan, all previous Management Plans of said species resulting from the requirement of 6.2 of the “Rules and Regulations Governing the Management of Marine Fisheries”, shall be superseded, provided that Management Plan promulgated by the Director or the RI Marine Fisheries Council will remain in effect until amended or replaced. Provided, furthermore, that any enforcement action taken by, or application submitted to, the Department prior to the effective date of this Management Plan shall be governed by the Management Plan in effect at the time the enforcement action was taken or application was filed.

RULE 7
EFFECTIVE DATE

The foregoing rules after due notice, are hereby adopted and filed with the Secretary of State this 13th day of December, 2004 to become effective 20 days from filing, unless otherwise indicated, in accordance with the provisions

Frederick J. Vincent,
Interim Director

Notice Given: 9/4/04
Public Hearing: 10/4/04

Filing date: 12/13/04
Effective date: 20 days from filing

INTRODUCTION

During the 2002 legislative session, the General Assembly adopted the Commercial Fishing Licenses Act, implementing a new commercial fishing license system and ending the moratorium on the issuance of new commercial fishing licenses that has been in place since 1995. One purpose of the Act is to enable new entrants into commercial fisheries; however, the Act also provides authority to limit access. Fisheries identified for consideration of limited access are those “for which there is adequate or greater than adequate harvesting capacity currently in the fishery” and those that are managed under a state quota system. In accordance with Section 20-2.1-9(5) of the Act, this management plan has been developed to identify the fisheries that the Department of Environmental Management proposes to limit entry at current levels of effort and fisheries for which new licenses may be issued.

Regulations implemented by the Department in 2002 created two endorsement categories for finfish, restricted and non-restricted. To date, the restricted category has been available only to multipurpose license holders and principal effort license holders with a restricted finfish endorsement, while species in the non-restricted category have been available without limitation to new participants with a basic commercial fishing license with a non-restricted endorsement. Since 2003, six species have been included in the restricted category: striped bass, scup, summer flounder, black sea bass, winter flounder and tautog. There were a total of 1,529 and 1,461 license holders eligible to harvest the restricted species in 2003 and 2004, respectively. No new restricted finfish endorsement, nor any new multipurpose licenses have been issued over the past two years. In 2003, 138 new non-restricted finfish endorsements were issued; in 2004, 147 such endorsements were issued (Table 1).

This management plan will be updated on an annual basis, and the list of restricted and non-restricted species will be evaluated with respect to stock status, quotas, current performance of the fishery, etc. A review of the number of restricted finfish licenses renewed will be conducted in consideration of exit-entry ratios needed to attain desired effort levels. Based on this information, the Department will propose for public hearing a new management plan each year.

RESTRICTED FINFISH

Summarized below are the stock status reports, management programs, and performance reports of species relegated to the restricted finfish category. All of these species are currently managed through a state quota system, with the exception of winter flounder. The Department’s interest in limiting participation in the quota-managed fisheries is not based purely on concern for stock dynamics, since quotas limit total landings within the State; and since these species are migratory, Rhode Island landings account for only a portion of the total. The main concern is with allowing too many people access to the resource, which would impact current license holders through shorter seasons, lower possession limits, and ultimately fewer pounds of fish. The primary goal for quota-managed fisheries has been to keep seasons open as long

as possible. At times this results in low possession limits that are not economically viable for the whole industry. Furthermore, shorter seasons resulting from increased effort also leads to an increase in regulatory discards since fishing activity continues during closures due to the multi-species nature of the fishing industry. During closures, many quota-managed species are captured as by-catch by industry targeting species that are open for harvest.

Based on assessment of season length and possession limits, recommendations have been developed regarding management of these fisheries under the new licensing system adopted by the General Assembly. Several questions are addressed regarding expansion of effort in these fisheries. First, have management goals been satisfied with the current conditions? The management goals, as previously mentioned, are full seasons with reasonable possession limits. Ideally, fisheries would remain open throughout the season with possession limits that are profitable for the industry and that diminish regulatory discards. With current levels of effort there is a minimum quota amount needed to attain these goals, which raises a second question. Have any of the quotas in recent years been adequate to meet these goals and what will future quotas most likely be? Finally, what would be the impact of increased effort?

SCUP

Stock Status - Scup was last assessed and reviewed at the Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Workshop in 2002. The Stock Assessment Review Committee (SARC) concluded that the scup resource is no longer considered over fished, as indicated by the 2002 spring trawl survey (NEFSC, 2002). Specifically, the 2003 three-year average of the spring survey (3.74 SSB kg/tow) exceeded the biomass index threshold (2.77 SSB kg/tow). This change in stock status resulted from the extremely high index obtained during the 2002 survey (9.24 kg/tow). The 2004 index of 2.84 kg/tow is consistent with values for recent years, but the three-year average of 3.74 kg/tow is also above the threshold. Stock status therefore remains unchanged.

Management Program- Scup are managed within state waters by the Department of Environmental Management with advice from the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council (RIMFC) and the Department's Division of Fish & Wildlife (RIDFW). Regional management of the scup resource is the shared responsibility of the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC) and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC). The Scup Fishery Management Plan (FMP) sets annual quota specifications into three sub-periods. During the two winter sub-periods, the quota is available coast wide and is restricted through the implementation of trip limits. A state-by-state quota system is in place for the summer sub-period (May – October), whereby quotas are distributed to the states based upon their percentage share of commercial landings for the period May through October 1983-1992. RI further divides the state quota into a general category allocation (40%) and a fish trap allocation (60%).

Performance of Fishery and 2005 Quotas- Efforts to keep the scup fishery open throughout the summer period has proven to be difficult due to the number of licensees

who have open access to the fishery (Tables 2a-e). With the exceptions of 2002 and 2004, the fishery has closed at some point during the summer period since the program began in 1997. In 2002 the fishery was open throughout the summer period because approximately 660,000 pounds of uncaught floating trap quota was added to the 680,000 pound quota for the general category. In 2003 the quota for the general category was 1,051,790 pounds, an increase of 50% from 2002 and was insufficient to keep the fishery open even with a 100-pound possession limit throughout most of the period. In 2004, however, the fishery was open throughout the summer period with the same quota allocation.

The quota for 2005 approved by the ASMFC and MAFMC is the same as 2004, providing approximately 1 million pounds to the general category. Any significant increase in effort would lead to longer closures. The Department's recommendation is to maintain net effort at the current level in the commercial scup fishery and to leave scup in the restricted species category.

SUMMER FLOUNDER

Stock Status – According to the 2004 assessment Summer Flounder Advisory Report summer flounder is not overfished and over fishing is not occurring relative to the current biological reference points. The fishing mortality rate has declined from 1.32 in 1994 to 0.29 in 2003, which is below the current over fishing definition reference point of 0.26 although the most recent estimates of F may understate the actual fishing mortality by about 1/3 as demonstrated through retrospective analysis.

Total stock biomass has increased substantially since 1989, and was estimated to be 67,500 MT on January 1, 2004, 27% above the current biomass threshold of 53,200 MT although retrospective analysis shows a tendency to overestimate biomass for recent years. Spawning stock biomass has increased eight fold since 1989, and the age structure of the population has expanded, with 72% of the population being two years of age and older. The 2002 year class estimate is the largest since 1986, at about 51 million fish.

Management Program: Summer Flounder are managed within state waters by DEM with advice from the RIMFC and RIDFW. Regional management of the summer flounder resource is the shared responsibility of MAFMC and ASMFC. Existing DEM regulations provide a framework to manage the annual summer flounder quota allocated to RI through possession limits and seasons. The total commercial quota is allocated into four sub-periods based on the proportion of catches during the years 1980 through 1989.

In RI, management of the fishery for summer flounder has been difficult and the subject of frequent allocation disputes. The winter commercial fishery is prosecuted offshore, by larger trawl vessels. During the summer, smaller trawl vessels, floating traps, gillnet and rod and reel fishermen direct their efforts on this species inshore, along with a substantial recreational fishery. Frequent possession limit reductions and closures are enacted by the RIDFW during each sub-period to keep RI landings within the quota allocated by MAFMC and ASMFC (Table 2a-e).

DEM implemented a Summer Flounder Exemption Program (SFEP) in 1995 to limit the number of vessels that could participate in the directed fishery, based upon their historical participation. At that time, a 200-pound limit was established for anyone who did not qualify for a SFEP. Due to the increase in stock biomass in the near shore waters and the number of license holders eligible to direct effort on the summer flounder fishery, the spring & summer sub-periods have been quickly exhausted, even with low trip limits of 100 pounds.

Performance of Fishery and 2005 Quotas: Under current levels of effort, the summer flounder fishery has been frequently closed. The season most affected has been the summer because of the small allocation available. The proportion of summer flounder taken by different gear types during the summer months has changed over the past few years. The percentage harvested by otter trawl has declined each year during the period 1996 to 2000, while the proportion taken by all other gear types has increased with the greatest increase occurring for the rod & reel sector. The increase in stock abundance over the same time period as evidenced by the RIDFW trawl surveys may explain this shift as fish have become more available to inshore fisherman. As a result, the performance of the fishery has also changed over the years. In 2004, the RIMFC shifted the allocation by adding the additional quota of 469,653 pounds to the summer I sub-period in order to maintain the fishery year around. This increase in quota allocation allowed the fishery to remain open throughout the summer period, which has not happened in numerous years. The quota approved for 2005 is an increase over 2004 and is expected to keep the fishery open throughout the year at current levels of effort. The Department's recommendation is to maintain net effort at the current level in the commercial summer flounder fishery and to leave summer flounder in the restricted species category.

TAUTOG

Stock Status: The ASMFC technical committee completed the most recent assessment of tautog in 2001 (ASMFC, 2001). Results indicate that coastwide fishing mortality rates have declined since 1993, however, since the 2000 rate ($F_{2000} = 0.41$) exceeds the target ($F_{\text{TARGET } 2000} = 0.24$) the stock is considered over fished. Abundance indices through 2000 show a slight increase in biomass and recruitment for recent years. The current index of stock size is slightly above the time series average, while the spawning stock biomass is below the time series average, indicating that a considerable proportion of the recent growth in the stock is from fish younger than spawning age. The recent increase in fishing mortality rates appear to be due to an increase in recreational landings, which comprise approximately 90% of total landings over the past six years. Commercial landings have not risen appreciably since plan implementation. Indices of abundance based on the RIDFW trawl survey indicate a recent increase in abundance locally; however, the 2002 estimate is below the time series average. Abundance indices for young-of-the-year tautog also point to an increase in abundance over the past several years, consistent with the results of the coastwide assessment (Powell, 2002). State assessment of tautog stocks, currently under development, may indicate

lower rates of fishing mortality and more optimistic trends in population growth compared to the regional assessment.

Management Program: Tautog are managed within state waters by the DEM with advice from the RIMFC. Regional management of the tautog resource is conducted by ASMFC through Addendum III to the Tautog FMP, which was adopted in February of 2002. The FMP in part requires a reduction in fishing mortality (F) because the most recent estimates of F exceed the target of 0.29. States were required to implement regulations that meet the required reductions by April 1, 2003. The final phase of the plan requires further reductions in fishing mortality to achieve a target of $F = 0.15$. Rhode Island was not required to implement these further reductions based on an assessment of local stocks completed by DEM and the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries, which indicated a decrease in fishing mortality and an increase in stock biomass in recent years. ASMFC approved the assessment and status quo for 2003 and 2004. Consequently, the state quota is not likely to increase over the next few years. The commercial fishery in Rhode Island is managed through a combination of seasons, quotas, and possession limits. Although it is not required, Rhode Island established a commercial quota, which in part achieves the fishing mortality targets required by the FMP. In 2004, the quota was divided equally into three seasons with a daily possession limit of 10 fish.

Performance of Fishery and 2005 Quotas: For the last three years, the commercial tautog fishery has closed early with excessive overages in the spring season. During the first sub-period in 2001, the fishery was open 33 of the 47 days and landings exceeded the allocation by 13,000 pounds. Had the fishery closed when the quota was reached the fishery would have been open for 27 days. The excessive overage was due to unusually high landings in one of the reporting weeks. This overage was deducted from the quota allocated to the first sub-period in 2002, leaving a small amount available. Catch rates in 2002 and 2003 were also very high with overages of 14,481 and 9,676 pounds, respectively. The high catch rates were still evident in 2003 even with a 10 fish possession limit, half the limit in 2002. In 2004, the fishery was open 32 days during the first sub-period with an overage of 5,867 pounds.

Recent stock surveys show that local populations are increasing in biomass. Landing rates are expected to increase as the stock grows and fish become more readily available. A combination of static commercial quotas, growing population biomass, and effort increases would lead to a drastic reduction in season length for a fishery that currently is unable to remain open throughout the season.

A substantial increase in the quota would be needed to keep the commercial tautog fishery open throughout the defined seasons. While an assessment conducted by Rhode Island and Massachusetts resource agencies show that local stocks are increasing ASMFC required that Rhode Island remain status quo for 2005. The Department's recommendation is to maintain net effort at the current level in the commercial tautog fishery and to leave tautog in the restricted species category.

STRIPED BASS

Stock Status: According to the stock assessment for 2003, overall abundance of the stock is very high and the fishing mortality is slightly over the target fishing mortality (Data on published yet). Model results indicate fishing mortality increased steadily until 1999 but decreased slightly in 2000 and then increased again in 2003. In 2003 the commercial quota was raised approximately 40% from the 2002 quota and remained at this level for 2004.

Management Program: Striped bass are managed by ASMFC through Addendum V to Amendment 5 to the interstate FMP, which requires minimum sizes for the commercial and recreational fisheries, possession limits for the recreational fishery, and state quotas for the commercial fishery. Based on the 1999 assessment, it was determined that the 1998 F estimate on fully recruited fish exceeded the target and equaled the over fishing definition. The management program for 2000 was aimed at reducing F, resulting in a smaller commercial quota than 1999. Based on the 2000 assessment, the Management Board determined that no additional reductions in F were necessary.

Regulations for the commercial striped bass fishery in Rhode Island include minimum sizes, possession limits, gear restrictions, seasons and quotas. The commercial quota is divided between two sectors, floating traps (37%) and a general category (63%). The quota for the general category, primarily rod & reel, and the floating trap fishery were made available during two seasons since 2001.

Performance of Fishery and 2005 Quotas: The catch rates of striped bass for the general category were similar for the spring fishery in 2002 and 2003. In 2002 and 2003, 108,000 pounds and 105,000 pounds were landed in 28 days, respectively. Since the quota was larger for 2003, a fall fishery was available, whereas the fishery remained closed throughout the fall in 2002. In 2004, the fishery was open for 20 days in the spring and 20 days in the fall with another opening expected to finish the floating trap quota.

Commercial quotas of the magnitude needed to keep the fishery open throughout most of the season are unlikely in the next few years because the most recent stock assessments indicate that the population of striped bass has not increased in biomass since 1997 and the recreational catch has increased dramatically over recent years. The Department's recommendation is to maintain net effort at the current level in the commercial striped bass fishery and to leave striped bass in the restricted species category.

BLACK SEA BASS

Stock Status: The most recent stock assessment on black sea bass, completed in June 2004, indicates that the stock is no longer overfished and overfishing is not occurring. The survey index in 2003 and 2004 indicates high abundance of age groups and that the 3-year moving average is about 55% above the threshold.

Management Program: The black sea bass stock is managed jointly by ASMFC and MAFMC. Amendment 13, which became effective in 2003, established a state quota system. Rhode Island's share of the commercial quota is 11%. Through advice from the RIMFC and the industry, the Department adopted regulations to allocate a percentage of the commercial quota into four seasonal sub-periods. The regulations also specified possession limits within each season.

Performance of Fishery and 2005 Quotas: The commercial quota will increase from 368,000 pounds to 522,340 pounds in 2005 and 535,080 pounds in 2006. The fishery has not closed this year, however a 100-pound possession limit was implemented during the months May through December. Any expansion of effort at this time would hinder the Department from meeting its objective of keeping the fishery open throughout the year under reasonable possession limits even with the recommended quota increase. The Department's recommendation is to maintain net effort at current levels in the commercial black sea bass fishery and to leave black sea bass in the restricted species category.

WINTER FLOUNDER

Stock Status: The ASMFC Winter Flounder Technical Committee conducted the most recent assessment of the Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic winter flounder stock in September 2002. According to this assessment, the stock is over fished and over fishing is occurring. Fully recruited fishing mortality in 2001 was 0.51, about 60% above the estimate of $F_{msy} = 0.32$. Spawning stock biomass was estimated to be 7,600 mt in 2001, about 25% of the estimate of $B_{msy} = 30,100$ mt.

Spawning stock biomass declined substantially from 13,000 – 14,000 mt during the early 1980's to only 2,700 mt during 1994 – 1996, but has increased since the mid 1990s to about 7,600 mt in 2001 due to reduced fishing mortality rates since 1997. The arithmetic average recruitment from 1981 to 2001 is 23.9 million age-1 fish, with a median of 18.9 million fish. Recent recruitment to the stock has been below average since 1989. The 2001-year class, at only 5.6 million fish, is the smallest in the 22-year time series.

The Rhode Island Division of Fish and Wildlife assessed the winter flounder stock within state waters in 2002 (Gibson, 2002). The fishing mortality rate after dropping below in 1996 has remained above $F_{msy} = 0.30$ indicating that rates of fishing are above levels that would achieve maximum sustainable yield. Estimates of biomass have remained well below $B_{msy} = 4,139$ mt since 1984. Estimates of biomass have fluctuated over the time period 1959 – 2002 with two peaks occurring in the mid to late 1960's and early 1980's. Estimates declined steadily over a ten-year period from 1983 to 1993, the estimate for 1993 being the lowest in the time series. A slight increase occurred between 1994 and 1995 to levels that have remained steady.

Management Program: Winter flounder are managed federally by the New England Fisheries Management Council through the Northeast Multispecies (Groundfish) Fishery Management Plan. Fishing mortality on the Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic stock is regulated through minimum sizes, gear restrictions, and restrictions on the number of

days allowed to fish. At the state level, for the purpose of managing winter flounder, a management area was established which includes all state waters north of a line from Sakonnet Point Light to Point Judith Light and north of the seaward entrance to all coastal salt ponds. In Narragansett Bay, the harvest and possession of winter flounder is prohibited with the exception of the southern most part. For other areas in the management area, minimum mesh size requirements, minimum fish size restrictions, possession limits, and quotas have been established. For all other State waters outside of the management area, there are minimum fish size and mesh size restrictions.

Fishery Performance and Projections: Since 1996, the commercial quota of winter flounder available for the Winter Flounder Management Area has never been fully harvested by the fishing industry. The rationale for placing this species in the restricted category is based on the low levels of abundance locally and over fishing on a regional basis. The Department's recommendation is to maintain effort at current levels in the commercial winter flounder fishery and to leave winter flounder in the restricted species category.

NON-RESTRICTED FINFISH

The species relegated to the non-restricted categories include all species of finfish with the exception of those listed in the restricted category. All species for which the state is allocated a quota are listed as restricted with the exception of bluefish since the quota allocated to the state has been more than the industry is able to harvest since it was implemented. Stock status and management are summarized for bluefish. The top ten commercially landed species in terms of pounds for the year 2000 contained in the non-restricted category are: herring, squid, skate, whiting, monkfish, mackerel, winter flounder, yellowtail flounder, red hake, and butterfish.

BLUEFISH

Stock Status: The Atlantic Coast bluefish stock was last assessed in 2002 (Gibson and Lazar, 2002). Fishing mortality (F) in 2001 was estimated to be $F = 0.25$. Accepting $F_{msy} = 0.40$, estimated in the 1997 assessment and adopted by Amendment 1, as an over fishing definition, the bluefish stock was not over fished in 2000 and 2001. However, biomass remains below levels needed to deliver MSY. Stock abundance declined between the late 1970s and the mid 1990's and has increased since.

Management Program: Bluefish are managed cooperatively by ASMFC and MAFMC through Amendment 1 to the Bluefish Fishery Management Plan. The Bluefish Monitoring Committee meets annually to review the most recent data and to make recommendations regarding the commercial quota, the recreational harvest limit, and other management measures. Commercial quotas have been implemented since 1994 and have never been fully harvested. Coastwide quotas have ranged between 9.583 and 11.38 million pounds with a quota of 10.5 million pounds approved for 2003.

Fishery Performance and Projections: Since 1994 when states were first allocated a commercial quota for bluefish, Rhode Island has not fully harvested its allocation and the fishery has never been closed while the quota system has been in place. In 2003, 54% of the quota was not harvested.

LICENSING OPTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In accordance with the licensing statute, the Department is to provide Rhode Islanders who wish to fish commercially the opportunity to do so while preserving the sustainability of fisheries. Specific provisions call for facilitating avenues for license upgrades and enabling new entry into commercial fishing. In 2003 and again in 2004, the Department did not issue any new restricted finfish endorsements for the basic commercial fishing license. This decision – supported by the RIMFC for 2003, and influenced by the RIFMC for 2004 -- was based on the RIDFW assessment of the restricted finfish species, in particular quota availability and possession limits in 2003 and 2004, and the management plan objectives of avoiding closures and maintaining reasonable possession limits. All fisheries for quota-managed species closed at some point during 2002 and 2003, when open possession limits were at very low levels.

In 2004, the Department issued 326 principal effort licenses with restricted finfish endorsements (338 in 2003) and 1,135 multipurpose licenses (1,191 in 2003). In total, 68 fewer licenses eligible to take restricted finfish were issued in 2004 than 2003. While there is no means to determine if these licenses were active or latent, the decreasing number of licenses is an issue of concern with the industry and the Department. Since new licenses have not been issued, the industry is composed of an ageing population of fishermen. New entry is necessary to ensure the viability of the industry.

During the process of developing regulations for the license program for 2005, the newly formed Commercial Fishermen's Committee and the RIMFC both advised against the issuance of new license/endorsement opportunities in the restricted finfish fishery. The opposition related primarily to the problem of controlling effort in one gear category versus another (i.e., rod and reel vs. trawl), which the current licensing program is not set up to address; and the need to take a cautionary approach to new entry, which should be based on an as-yet-nonexistent data base that can show whether retired licenses are active or latent.

Recent quota increases for summer flounder, and black sea bass and steady quotas for the remaining species have led to longer seasons in 2004. The summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass fisheries have not closed at all this year, the first time since the quota programs were initiated (except for scup in 2002). The recommendations as set forth in this plan are to maintain the current list of restricted species and recent levels of effort in order to maintain the expansion of season length experienced in 2004. The decrease in licenses issued however has potentially reduced effort. Thus, in the view of the Department, the fishery can therefore withstand new participants to replace this recent attrition. New licenses can be made available conservatively to account for unknown activity of the licenses that were not renewed by applying an exit/entry ratio such as 5 to 1. This will allow for some limited entry without a significant change in effort levels.

The Department also recommends continuing to issue new licenses, without restriction, to harvest species in the non-restricted category, which contains all other species not included in the restricted category.

AVAILABILITY OF NEW LICENSES IN 2005

For 2005, a 5:1 exit/entry ratio is recommended for to the restricted finfish fishery, resulting in the availability of 13 new commercial fishing licenses with restricted finfish endorsements. The new licenses/endorsements will be issued in accordance with the prioritization process set forth in section 6.7-6 of the licensing regulations. The basic harvest level, applicable to the new licenses/endorsements, shall be established via subsequent regulatory action.

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Table 1: RI Commercial Fishing Licenses 2003 and 2004

LICENSES			
	2003	2004	CHANGE
MULTI-PURPOSE LICENSE	1,191	1,135	-56
PRINCIPAL EFFORT LICENSE	1,325	1,148	-177
LOBSTER ENDORSEMENT	61	56	-5
NON-LOBSTER CRUSTACEAN ENDORSEMENT	19	20	1
QUAHOG ENDORSEMENT	924	776	-148
NON-QUAHOG ENDORSEMENT	672	556	-116
RESTRICTED FINFISH ENDORSEMENT	338	326	-12
NON-RESTRICTED FINFISH ENDORSEMENT	138	147	9
COMMERICAL FISHING LICENSE	271	283	12
LOBSTER ENDORSEMENT	50	48	-2
NON-LOBSTER CRUSTACEAN ENDORSEMENT	68	69	1
NON-QUAHOG ENDORSEMENT	156	172	16
NON-RESTRICTED FINFISH ENDORSEMENT	192	198	6
OVER 65 SHELLFISH LICENSE	50	86	36
STUDENT SHELLFISH LICENSE	107	97	-10
LANDING PERMITS			
	2003	2004	CHANGE
RESIDENT			
MULTI-PURPOSE	17	20	3
FINFISH	9	8	-1
CRUSTACEAN	2	1	-1
SHELLFISH	0	0	0
MISCELLANEOUS	0	0	0
NON-RESIDENT			
MULTI-PURPOSE	54	46	-8
RESTRICTED FINFISH	5	5	
NON-RESTRICTED FINFISH	26	23	-3
CRUSTACEAN	2	2	0
SHELLFISH	1	4	3
MISCELLANEOUS	0	0	0
GEAR ENDORSEMENTS			

	2003	2004	CHANGE
FISH TRAP	9	9	0
GILL NET	323	307	-16
OTHER LICENSES & DECLARATIONS			
	2003	2004	CHANGE
AQUACULTURE LICENSE	10	9	-1
VESSEL DECLARATION	1,905	1,829	-76
BOAT PLATE	96	65	-31
DEALER LICENSES			
	2003	2004	CHANGE
MULTI-PURPOSE	172	176	4
FINFISH	14	30	16
LOBSTER	10	6	-4
SHELL	11	22	11

Table 2a. Possession Limits (pounds), seasons, and quotas for Rhode Island commercial fisheries in 2004

YEAR	DATE	Summer Flounder	Scup general category	Tautog	Striped Bass general category	Black Sea Bass
2004	1-Jan		15,000/week			
		700	2,000/day	closed	closed	1,500
	6-Jan	700/day				
		3,000/week				
	26-Feb	700				
	6-Mar	300				
	17-Apr	750				
	15-Apr			10 fish		
	5-Apr	100				
	1-May		1,000			100
	17-May			closed		
	1-Jun				4 fish	
	25-Jun	150	100			
	21-Jun				closed	
	1-Aug			10 fish		
	12-Aug	200				
	1-Sept				3 fish	
	13-Sept	300			closed	
	16-Sept		100	closed		
	9-Oct	500				
	15-Oct			10 fish		
	23-Oct	1,000	500		3 fish	
	26-Oct				closed	
	1-Nov	450	2,000			500
	3-Nov	1,000	3,500		3 fish	100
	8-Nov				closed	
Days in Season		365	365	171	214	365
Total Days Open		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total Days Closed		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
*Indicates scheduled closure						
Commercial Seasons						
	Jan 1-Apr 30	Jan 1 - Apr 30 ^F	Apr 15 - May 31	Jun 1 - Dec 31	Jan 1-Mar 31	
	May 1-Jul 31	May 1 - Jun 30	Aug 1 - Sep 15		Apr 1-Jun 30	
	Aug 1-Oct 31	July 1 - Sep 15	Oct 15 - Dec 31		Jul 1-Sep 30	
	Nov 1 -Dec 31	Sep 16 - Oct 31			Oct 1-Dec 31	
		Nov 1 - Dec 31 ^F				
^F Federal coastwide quota						
Quotas						
State		2,637,117	982,695	38,568	146,175	408,737
Federal		-----	5,602,495	-----	-----	-----

Table 2b. Possession Limits (pounds), seasons, and quotas for Rhode Island commercial fisheries in 2003

YEAR	DATE	Summer Flounder	Scup general category	Tautog	Striped Bass general category	Black Sea Bass
2003	1-Jan	700	10,000	closed	closed	1,000
	16-Feb	1,500	15,000/week 2,000/day			
	1-Apr					1,500
	15-Apr			10 fish		
	30-Mar	300				500
	5-Apr	100				100
	1-May		1,000			
	16-May			closed		
	1-Jun				4 fish	
	6-Jun					50
	14-Jun		100			
	21-Jun	closed				
	29-Jun				closed	
	1-Aug	150		10 fish		100
	24-Aug		closed			
	1-Sept				3 fish	
	12-Sept				closed	
	16-Sept		100	closed		
	8-Oct		300			50
	15-Oct			10 fish		
	16-Oct				3 fish	
	21-Oct					Closed
	24-Oct		4000			
	26-Oct				closed	
	30-Oct		1000			
	1-Nov	450	4000			500
	4-Nov					100
	8-Nov				3 fish	
	19-Nov			closed		closed
	6-Dec	1000				
Days in Season		365	365	171	214	365
Total Days Open		324	341	112	104	223
Total Days Closed		41	24	253	261	142
*Indicates scheduled closure						
Commercial Seasons						
	Jan 1-Apr 30	Jan 1 - Apr 30 ^F	Apr 15 - May 31	Jun 1 - Dec 31	Jan 1-Mar 31	
	May 1-Jul 31	May 1 - Jun 30	Aug 1 - Sep 15		Apr 1-Jun 30	
	Aug 1-Oct 31	July 1 - Sep 15	Oct 15 - Dec 31		Jul 1-Sep 30	
	Nov 1 -Dec 31	Sep 16 - Oct 31			Oct 1-Dec 31	
		Nov 1 - Dec 31 ^F				
^F Federal coastwide quota						
Quotas						
State		2,183,907	1,051,790	39,501	144,398	330,224
Federal		-----	7,582,184	-----	-----	-----

Table 2c. Possession Limits (pounds), seasons, and quotas for Rhode Island commercial fisheries in 2002

YEAR	DATE	Summer Flounder	Scup general category	Tautog	Striped Bass general category	Black Sea Bass
2002	1-Jan	700	10,000	closed	closed	7,000
	10-Feb	1,500				
	7-Mar		1,000			
	1-Apr					1,500
	15-Apr			20 fish		
	28-Apr	100		closed		
	11-May		100			
	28-May					150
	1-Jun				4 fish	
	7-Jun					closed
	23-Jun	closed				
	29-Jun				closed	
	1-Jul					500
	16-Jul					100
	1-Aug	150		20 fish		
	6-Aug					closed
	10-Aug		200			
	16-Sep			closed*		
	1-Oct		750			750
	5-Oct		200			
	15-Oct			20 fish		
	20-Oct		300			
	24-Oct					100
	1-Nov	450				
	1-Nov		2,000			
	28-Nov	150				
	22-Nov					Closed
	23-Nov			closed		
	2-Dec		closed			
Days in Season		365	365	171	214	245
Total Days Open		326	335	98	28	201
Total Days Closed		39	30	73	186	120
*Indicates scheduled closure						
Commercial Seasons						
	Jan 1-Apr 30	Jan 1 - Apr 30 ^F	Apr 15 - May 31	Jun 1 - Dec 31	Jan 1-Mar 31 ^F	
	May 1-Jul 31	May 1 - Jun 30	Aug 1 - Sep 15		Apr 1-Jun 30 ^F	
	Aug 1-Oct 31	July 1 - Sep 15	Oct 15 - Dec 31		Jul 1-Sep 30 ^F	
	Nov 1 -Dec 31	Sep 16 - Oct 31			Oct 1-Dec 31 ^F	
		Nov 1 - Dec 31 ^F				
^F Federal coastwide quota						
Quotas						
State		679,335			-----	
Federal		-----			-----	

Table 2d. Possession Limits (pounds), seasons, and quotas for Rhode Island commercial fisheries in 2001

YEAR	DATE	Summer Flounder	Scup general category	Tautog	Striped Bass general category	Black Sea Bass
2001	1-Jan	1,000	10,000	0	0	9,000
	30-Jan		1,000			
	7-Feb	500				4,500
	7-Mar		closed			closed
	15-Mar	750				
	1-Apr					1,500
	15-Apr			20 fish		
	1-May		1,000			
	10-May	100				
	14-May					150
	15-May		100			
	17-May	50				
	18-May			closed		
	26-May		closed			
	1-Jun	100			4 fish	
	11-Jun	50				
	14-Jun					closed
	25-Jun				closed	
	1-Jul		100			1,000
	12-Jul					150
	24-Jul					closed
	25-Jul	closed	closed			
	1-Aug			20 fish	3 fish	
	5-Aug				closed	
	1-Sep	100				
	15-Sep				4 fish	
	16-Sep		100	closed*		
	27-Sep				closed	
	28-Sep		closed			
	1-Oct					300
	13-Oct				4 fish	
	15-Oct				closed	
	15-Oct			20 fish		
	1-Nov	350	2,000			
	10-Nov					closed
	16-Nov			closed		
	23-Nov		closed			
	29-Nov	1,000				
	15-Dec	closed				
Days in Season		365	365	171	122	365
Total Days Open		310	148	111	42	201
Total Days Closed		55	217	60	80	164
*Indicates scheduled closure						
Commercial Seasons						
	Jan 1-May 31	Jan 1 - Apr 30 ^F	Apr 15 - May 31	Jun 1 - Jun 30	Jan 1-Mar 31 ^F	
	Jun 1-Aug 31	May 1 - Jun 30	Aug 1 - Sep 15	Oct 1 - Dec 31	Apr 1-Jun 30 ^F	
	Sep 1-Oct 31	July 1 - Sep 15	Oct 15 - Dec 31		Jul 1-Sep 30 ^F	
	Nov 1 -Dec 31	Sep 16 - Oct 31			Oct 1-Dec 31 ^F	

Nov 1 - Dec 31^F

^F Federal coastwide quota					
Quotas					
State	1,743,117	377,818	51,348	107,730	-----
Federal	-----	2,384,090	-----	-----	2,735,412

Table 2e. Possession limits (pounds), seasons, and quotas for Rhode Island commercial fisheries in 2000

YEAR	DATE	Summer Flounder	Scup general category	Tautog	Striped Bass general category	Black Sea Bass
2000	1-Jan	1,000	10,000			9,000
	8-Feb		1,000			
	17-Feb		closed			
	1-Apr	500				3,000
	1-May	300	1,000	20 fish		
	16-May	100	100			
	17-May		closed			
	18-May	closed				
	1-Jun	100		closed*	3 fish	
	23-Jun	50				
	1-Jul	closed	100		closed*	3,000
	1-Aug			20 fish		
	9-Aug		closed			closed
	16-Aug		100			
	28-Aug		300			
	1-Sep	300			3 fish	
	10-Sep		100			
	16-Sep			closed*		
	17-Sep	50				
	24-Sep	closed				
	1-Oct		closed			2,000
	8-Oct	50				
	15-Oct	closed		20 fish		
	23-Oct	50				
	26-Oct					1,000
	1-Nov	300	500			
	3-Nov		closed		closed	
	7-Nov					closed
	18-Nov	600				
	22-Nov				3 fish	
	27-Nov				closed	
	10-Dec	200				
Days in Season		365	365	155	152	365
Total Days Open		268	150	155	98	257
Total Days Closed		97	215	0	54	108

* Indicates scheduled closure

Commercial Seasons

				June 1 - June	
	Jan 1-May 31	Jan 1 - Apr 30	May 1 - May 31	30	Jan 1-Mar 31 ^F
	June 1-Aug 31	May 1 - June 30	Aug 1 - Sep 15	Sep 1 - Dec 31	Apr 1-Jun 30 ^F
	Sep 1-Oct 31	July 1 - Sep 15	Oct 15 - Dec 31		Jul 1-Sep 30 ^F
	Nov 1 -Dec 31	Sep 16 - Oct 31			Oct 1-Dec 31 ^F
		Nov 1 - Dec 31			

^F Federal coastwide quota					
Quotas					
State	1,742,581	377,818	51,348	81,390	-----
Federal	-----	1,213,516	-----	-----	2,578,949

Table 2f. Possession limits (pounds), seasons, and quotas for Rhode Island commercial fisheries in 1999

Table 21. Possession limits (pounds), seasons, and quotas for Rhode Island commercial fisheries in 1999						
YEAR	DATE	Summer Flounder	Scup general category	Tautog	Striped Bass general category	Black Sea Bass
1999	1-Jan	1,000	20,000			11,000
	26-Mar	400				
	1-Apr					7,000
	1-May		2,500			
	15-May			20fish		
	13-May	300				
	26-May	closed				
	1-Jun	100			2fish	
	11-Jun			closed		
	1-Jul				closed*	3,000
	16-Jul	50				
	5-Aug	closed				
	1-Sep	300			2fish	
	10-Sep		closed			
	16-Sep	100				
	30-Sep	closed				
	1-Oct					4,000
	5-Oct				closed	
	1-Nov	300	8,000			
	4-Dec		closed			
	11-Dec	400				
	20-Dec					closed
	29-Dec	1,000				
Days in Season		365	365	231	152	365
Total Days Open		300	285	27	64	353
Total Days Closed		65	80	204	88	12
* Indicates scheduled closure						
Commercial Seasons						
	Jan 1-May 31	Jan 1 - Apr 30	May 15-Dec31	June 1 - June 30	Jan 1-Mar 31 ^F	
	June 1-Aug 31	May 1-Oct 31		Sep 1 - Dec 31	Apr 1-Jun 30 ^F	
	Sep 1-Oct 31	Nov 1 - Dec 31			Jul 1-Sep 30 ^F	
	Nov 1 -Dec 31				Oct 1-Dec 31 ^F	
^F Federal coastwide quota						
Quotas						
State	1,742,581	239,128	25,582	95,138	-----	
Federal	-----	1,547,007	-----	-----		3,025,001